

James Phelps, Jeff Dailey, and Monica Koenigsberg, *Border Security*

(Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2014)

Reviewed by Robert J. Bunker

The new work *Border Security* written by James R. Phelps, Jeff Dailey, and Monica Koenigsberg is close to four hundred pages in length and can be considered the definitive tome on the topic as it relates to US border security perceptions, practices, and issues. The work is both comprehensive in scope and holistic in its approach. Underlying themes to the book are that border security is in many ways timeless (e.g., the Great Wall of China and Hadrian's Wall), with past states and peoples coping with similar issues that we have today, that is, allowing those in who should be let into a state and keeping others out who somehow threaten a state and its people. Further, border security within the work is viewed more within the context of a long term defense-in-depth rather than just as a linear defense.¹ Also, the work rightfully argues that short-term border security fixes rarely work as planned and may actually make a bad situation even worse.

The authors, all faculty PhDs in various criminal justice, border and homeland security, and security studies programs at Angelo State University, San Angelo, Texas bring a wealth of experience to this work. Phelps, who also is retired US Navy, penned nearly half of the chapters. Dailey, who also has a military intelligence background with the NSA, Navy, and Air Force, and Koenigsberg, with her policing and prison officer background, also bring practitioner expertise to their contributions. This combination of academics with real world experience is very valuable in an applied academic work in the security field.

The book is organized into three parts: I. Defining Borders (ch.1-5); II. Border Security and Transnational Crime (ch. 6-9); and III. U.S. Border Security Today (ch. 10-12) with the

following chapter subdivisions: (1) Barriers, Boundaries, and Borders; (2) Border Security in History; (3) Border Security Agency Operations; (4) Physical Border Security; (5) Maritime Border Security; (6) Trafficking: Contraband, Smuggling and the Law; (7) People Movers: Human Trafficking and Population Migrations; (8) Borders, Economic Interdependence, and Internet Crime; (9) Transportation Security; (10) The U.S.-Mexico Border; (11) The U.S.-Canadian Border; and (12) The Future of Borders and Boundaries in the Modern World. Each chapter has accompanying endnotes. Front sections include a foreword, acknowledgements, and author biographies. A detailed index is contained in the back of the book.

The strengths of the work are that it analyzes today's border security issues from a solid historical basis. No partisan politics were detected in the work and so the writing does not appear to be politically motivated or skewed. The work covers the myriad of border security issues as individual and intertwined problems, which allows the reader an integrative perspective on the dynamics of border security. Still, a few weaknesses are evident. As a textbook, it would be appropriate to have some sort of key terms listing at the beginning of chapters or within the text. Also missing are review and discussion questions at the ends of the chapters. These omissions have been noted by the authors and will be added in later editions of the textbook. In the meantime, key terms and review and discussion questions will be provided in the forthcoming instructor's manual. This reviewer very much enjoyed reading the various chapters but at times – given the clinical nature of the text and the analytical

writing style taken – certain sections were not easy to comprehend and required a second reading to better understand the concepts and examples provided.

The contribution of the work to this field of study is that it provides a first look at border security as an essential component of homeland security. The work is written from an academic perspective and not from that of a first person storytelling narrative as so many works on this topic have been in the past; see for example, Lee Morgan's *The Reapers Line* (Rio Nuevo 2006). Except for the contemporary work *U.S. Border Security: A Reference Handbook* by Judith Warner (ABC-Clio 2010) – interestingly enough also an academic from Texas – there are no other textbooks on border security.² The Warner text was specifically written as a reference resource and offers very useful reference material with many chronologies, biographical sketches, data and documents, directories, and other resources; this reviewer strongly suggests it as a supporting text in courses on the topic of border security. Of the two works, *Border Security* has the obvious edge, in that it was actually developed as a college textbook for teaching purposes. As a result, this new work will set the standard for all subsequent authors approaching this subject with a textbook in mind.

In summation, *Border Security* is a comprehensive and in-depth work on border – and homeland – security with excellent utility for both undergraduate and graduate level courses. It establishes a baseline for more focused discussions on a wide range of important topics intimately tied to the international problem of homeland security. Further, *Border Security* provides detailed coverage of both historical and contemporary issues in a clear and concise manner for the university student and should be considered essential reading for anyone wanting to participate in border security discussions. Given the size and scope of the text, it is fairly priced at \$60.00.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Robert J. Bunker is a distinguished visiting professor and Minerva Chair at the Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College. He is also adjunct faculty, Division of Politics and Economics, Claremont Graduate University. Disclosure: The author provided a back cover endorsement of the work and was also a galley reviewer. All views are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or the United States government.

NOTES

1. The reviewer could not agree more with this viewpoint. See Robert J. Bunker, “U.S. border security spending: Too much, too late?” Baker Institute Blog. *Houston Chronicle*, July 30, 2013, <http://blog.chron.com/bakerblog/2013/07/u-s-border-security-spending-too-much-too-late/>.
2. The work by Andrew Staniforth and Police National Legal Database (PNLD), *Blackstone’s Handbook of Ports & Border Security Paperback* (Oxford 2013) also has a lot of merit but is UK focused and far more applied in nature. It is meant for UK police officers engaging in port and border security duties and as a result is more of a training, rather than an educational, resource.

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